

duty on Natural Rubber will be incompatible with WTO regulations. However, the Govt, has filed its negotiating proposals with the WTO for inclusion of rubber in the rationalisation of product coverage under the Agreement on Agriculture.

Applications Cleared by FIPB

2584. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that 33 applications for investment by foreign firms recommended by the Foreign Investment Promotion Board, have been cleared by the Ministry very recently;
- (b) if so, the total amount and investment expected; and
- (c) whether the backward States like Bihar will be benefited from such foreign investment and if so, to what extent?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN SINGH): (a) and (b) A total number of 33 proposals envisaging total FDI of Rs. 362 crore for different States and Union Territories, covering various sectors including manufacture of chemicals, textile processing, laminated flooring material and accessories, processed food, automobile components, scientific equipment, electronics, information technology and ISP, software development and consultancy, telecommunications and data systems, have been cleared recently by the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) in accordance with the prevailing FDI Policy and in consultation with concerned administrative Ministries/Departments.

(c) The investment decisions are dependent upon the commercial judgement of the investors which depends on the availability of adequate and dependable infrastructure facilities such as power, developed land, etc., and incentives and subsidies provided by State Governments for attracting investment into the States and Union Territories.

Emerging Threat to Indian Leather Industry

2585. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that technical specifications on product quality are fast emerging as a threat to the \$ 2 billion Indian Leather Industry;